

CLAIMS

1. A tailgate cable assembly for connecting a vehicle tailgate to a sidewall of a vehicle, wherein the cable assembly comprises:

an elongated cable having a first end and a second end;

a gate-connector eyelet mounted on the first end of the cable and adapted to secure the cable to a first fastener extending outwardly from the tailgate;

a side-connector eyelet mounted on the second end of the cable and adapted to secure the cable to a second fastener extending outwardly from the sidewall;

a removable locking member engageable with one of the side-connector eyelet and gate-connector eyelet; the locking member being rotatable between a first position, where one of the first and second fasteners may be selectively engaged with or disengaged from the one of the side-connector eyelet and gate-connector eyelet; and a second position where the one of the first and second fasteners is secured to the one of the side-connector eyelet and gate-connector eyelet.

2. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein the removable locking member is engageable with the side-connector

eyelet and wherein the locking member is rotatable between a first position, where the second fastener may be selectively engaged with or disengaged from the side-connector eyelet; and a second position where the second fastener is secured to the side-connector eyelet.

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3. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein the side-connector eyelet has an aperture through which the locking member is received and the aperture has an open side; and wherein the locking member covers the open side of the aperture when the locking member is in the second position.

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4. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 3, wherein the aperture is substantially C-shaped and the locking member is substantially C-shaped and defines a C-shaped hole therein; and wherein the aperture and the C-shaped hole of the locking member are aligned when the locking member is in the first position.

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5. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein the side-connector eyelet has a first surface with an aperture formed therein and a peripheral surface surrounding the aperture; and wherein the locking member is a substantially C-shaped member having:

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a fastener-engaging surface adapted to engage a head
of the second fastener;

a rear surface adapted to abut the first surface of the
side- connector eyelet;

5 a flange extending outwardly from and normal to the rear
surface; whereby the flange engages the peripheral surface of the eyelet.

6. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 5, wherein the locking
member further comprises:

10 a peripheral lip formed on the flange; whereby a channel
is formed between the rear surface of the C-shaped member and the lip; and
wherein the C-shaped member is adapted to be inserted into the aperture in
the side-connector eyelet and to engage a portion of the peripheral surface
of the side-connector eyelet within the channel.

15 7. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 5, wherein the flange
and side-connector eyelet frictionally engage to retain the C-shaped
member on the side-connector eyelet.

20 8. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein part of the
first surface of the side-connector eyelet is substantially flat and the

locking member engages with that flat part of the first surface and rotates about an axis disposed substantially at right angles to the flat part of the first surface.

- 5 9. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein the locking member has an outer peripheral wall and the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets has an outer peripheral wall; and the outer peripheral wall of the locking member extends beyond the outer peripheral wall of the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets when the locking member is in the first position.
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10. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 5, wherein the locking member has a diameter and the flange has a diameter, and the diameter of the locking member is greater than the diameter of the flange.
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11. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein the locking member has a diameter and the diameter of the locking member is substantially the same size as the diameter of one of the first and second fastener it is adapted to secure to the one of the gate-connector and side connector eyelets.
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12. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein only the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets touches the one of the first and second fasteners when the cable is in tension.

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13. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein the locking member includes a fastener-engaging surface which lies substantially parallel to a portion of a front surface of the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets when the locking member is in the second position; and wherein the one of the first and second fasteners has a head which is supported on the fastener-engaging surface of the locking member and does not come into contact with said portion of said front surface.

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14. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein the locking member and the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets each have a radius of curvature; and wherein the radius of curvature of the locking member and the radius of curvature of the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets are substantially the same.

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15. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 2, wherein the aperture in the side-connector eyelet is substantially keyhole shaped having a wider portion and a narrower portion; and wherein the locking member engages the first surface of the eyelet surrounding the narrower portion of the aperture.
16. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein the locking member is manufactured from one of the group consisting of acetal, polyester, nylon and filled nylon plastics.
17. The tailgate cable assembly as defined in claim 1, wherein the locking plate includes a ribbed outer wall.
18. In combination, a cable assembly and fasteners for rotatably securing a tailgate to a sidewall of a vehicle, the combination comprising:
- a first fastener extending outwardly from the tailgate;
 - a second fastener extending outwardly from the sidewall of the vehicle;
 - an elongated cable having a first end and a second end;
 - a gate-connector eyelet mounted on the first end of the cable ;
 - a side-connector eyelet mounted on the second end of the cable;
 - a removable locking member;

and wherein the locking member is selectively engageable with one of the side-connector and gate-connector eyelets to lock one of the first and second fastener within the one of the side-connector and gate-connector eyelets; and wherein the locking member is rotatable between a first position, where the one of the first and second fasteners may be selectively engaged with or disengaged from the one of the side-connector and gate-connector eyelets; and a second position where the one of the first and second fasteners is locked into the one of the side-connector and gate-connector eyelets.

19. The combination as defined in claim 18, wherein the removable locking member is engageable with the side-connector eyelet and the second fastener; and wherein the locking member is rotatable between a first position, where the second fastener may be selectively engaged with or disengaged from the side-connector eyelet; and a second position where the second fastener is secured to the side-connector eyelet.

20. The combination as defined in claim 19, wherein the side-connector eyelet has an aperture through which the locking member is received and the aperture has an open side; and wherein the locking member covers the open side of the aperture when the locking member is in the second position.

21. The combination as defined in claim 19, wherein the side-connector eyelet has a first surface with an aperture formed therein and a peripheral surface surrounding the aperture; and the second fastener has a head; and the locking member is a substantially C-shaped member having:

5 a fastener-engaging surface adapted to engage the head of the second fastener;

a rear surface adapted to abut the first surface of the side-connector eyelet;

10 a flange extending outwardly from and normal to the rear surface; whereby the flange engages the peripheral surface of the eyelet; and

15 a peripheral lip formed on the flange; whereby a channel is formed between the rear surface of the C-shaped member and the lip; and wherein the C-shaped member is adapted to be inserted into the aperture in the side-connector eyelet and to engage a portion of the peripheral surface of the side-connector eyelet within the channel.

22. The combination as defined in claim 21, wherein the locking member has a diameter and the flange has a diameter, and the diameter of the locking member is greater than the diameter of the flange.

23. The combination as defined in claim 18, wherein only the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets touches the one of the first and second fasteners when the cable is in tension.

5 24. The combination as defined in claim 18, wherein the locking member and the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets each have a radius of curvature; and wherein the radius of curvature of the locking member and the radius of curvature of the one of the gate-connector and side-connector eyelets are substantially the same.

10 25. The combination as defined in claim 18, wherein the locking member is manufactured

15 26. An insert for securing a tailgate cable assembly to a support in a vehicle; wherein the cable assembly includes a cable with a connector at one end; wherein the connector has a first surface with an aperture formed therein and an interior peripheral surface surrounding the aperture; and wherein the aperture receives a fastener that extends outwardly from and normal to the support; the insert comprising:

20 a substantially C-shaped member having:

a fastener-engaging surface adapted to engage a head of the fastener;

a rear surface adapted to abut the first surface of the connector;

a flange extending outwardly from and normal to the rear surface; and

5 a peripheral lip formed on the flange; whereby a channel is formed between the rear surface and the lip; and wherein the C-shaped member is adapted to be inserted into the aperture in the connector and to receive a portion of the interior peripheral surface within the channel.

10 27. The insert as defined in claim 26, wherein the channel of the C-shaped member has a width and the connector interior peripheral surface has a width and the width of the channel is substantially equal to the width of the interior peripheral surface of the connector.

15 28. The insert as defined in claim 26, wherein the C-shaped member defines a C-shaped opening and the fastener-engaging surface of the C-shaped member has leading edges proximate the opening; and wherein the leading edges are angled and are adapted to guide the fastener into the opening.

20 29. The insert as defined in claim 26, wherein the C-shaped member further comprises:

a front surface disposed a distance outwardly from the fastener
engaging surface;

an outer peripheral wall connecting the front surface of the C-shaped
member to the rear surface of the C-shaped member; and wherein the C-shaped
5 member is rotatable between a first position, where the fastener may be inserted or
withdrawn from the aperture, and a second position where the C-shaped member
substantially prevents withdrawal of the fastener from the connector.

30. The insert as defined in claim 29, wherein the outer peripheral wall is ribbed.

31. The insert as defined in claim 26, wherein the C-shaped member is
manufactured from one of the group consisting of acetal, polyester, nylon
and filled nylon plastics.